



WORK AND STYLE OF NANDLAL BOSE A CRITICAL STUDY

M. F. A. Dissertation

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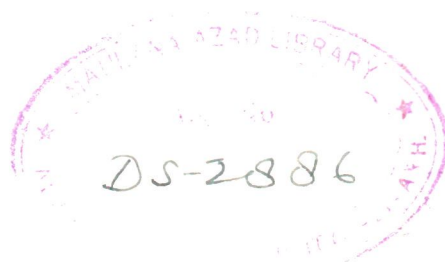
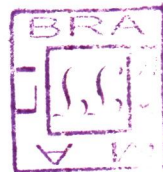
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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that **Miss Rana Rehman** of Master of Fine Art (M.F.A.) has completed her dissertation entitled "**Work Style of Nandalal Bose A Critical Study**" under the supervision of Prof. Ashfaq M. Rizvi and co-supervision of Dr. (Mrs.) Sirtaj Rizvi (Reader).

To the best of my knowledge and belief the work is based on the investigations made, data collected and analysed by her and it has not been submitted in any other University or Institution for any Degree.

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(MRS. SEEMA JAVED)
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(RANA RAHMAN)

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CHAPTER - I

Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

What makes an artist or his work really great? His technique? His originality? His aesthetic sensibility? Or, his uniqueness? Judged by the last standard, Nandalal Bose is a great artist and his work, whether murals or unfinished sketches, really great of course even without the rich aesthetic flavour of Abanindranath Tagore, the technical excellence of K. Venkatappa; or, the robust characteristics of D.P. Roy Choudhry. Nandalal was great both as man and artist. His art has serenity, sincerity and sobriety, and teacher of art he was perexcellence.

A story is told of how he became an art student under Abanindra Nath Tagore, which, if true, reveals the man when he to approached his future teacher for admission to the Government School of Art in Calcutta, Mr. Tagore asked him if he knew how to draw! The prospective students reply was sudden and sharp. 'Sir' he said 'if I knew how to draw, why should I come to you? The bold answer cemented the guru-shisha relationship at the very outset, for, as it happened, Nandalal succeeded, so to speak, as Tagore's heir to the world of art founded by his teacher in Bengal, in the early years of this century

of the artists who helped extend this little kingdom of art and beauty throughout India, Nandalal is next only to Tagore while the latter's influence spread also through, poetry, music, song, as well as painting, the former had his art pupils take the message of their master through brush and colour to all the country over. Nandalal's students became either art-masters renowned or practising artists, and for each fond students.

In fact Nandalal's distinctive contribution to Indian art is the revitalising of the ashram's ideal in art education, which trained his students to discover and not be mere imitators only a Nandalal could succeed in turning out pupils of a Ramakinkar Baij, or Sudhir Khastagir calibre. Nandalal's technique as a teacher was first to make his students discover their heritage and then their own innate genius, the tree must have its roots deep in the soil if it is to grow to its full stature.

A striking feature of Nandalal's art is the dynamic quality of his line. In this he is nearest to the Ajantan masters, in fact, he is the most Ajantan among modern painters. There is no doubt that he has been deeply influenced by this art of ancient India. We see it in every detail of his art. Not that he has no originality, he has that in abundance. In fact, it is

given to few artists to invest well known themes with the charm, freshness, richness of his own imagination, as well as the depth of his consciousness.

Again as a mural painter, a book illustrator, a designer of deors, and as a painter of myths and legends, Nandalal, has few rivals among his contemporaries. Art has been to him a like long apprenticeship, and like Venketappa, he resents being called an artist but prefers to be known as a life long student of art. This is no mock modesty on their part. Both always mean what they say. All Nandalal's earliest painting have a lyrical flavour and a sensitive quality, e.g., there's the delicate study called '**Sujata**'. This village meid of urvillafed the famished body of the Buddha with tender devotion, day after day, till her milkboiled rice gave Goulama the necessary strength to sit under the Bodhi tree and become the Enliglened one. The vary colour scheme is suggestive of the mood of the maid and her mission. Deep anxiety and a serene wistfulness light up the young maid's face, as she treads her way to the royalascetic's resting place. The tender approach towards Buddha with the life - giving food, is elched with fine feeling.

Of course the 'Bull' is a sketch executed in one of Nandalal's lighter moods, infact such sketches were a regular hobby with him, and there are thousands of them

scattered all over the country. The virile quality of his line is, easily discernible here. Both '**Sujata**' & '**Bull**' were once in the B.N. Treasury wala collection, Bombay, and are now in the National Art Gallery, New Delhi.

Nandalal journey to Japan with the poet Rabindranath Tagore and his close association with the foremost artists of that country, and especially with the leaders of the Japanese renaissance, Taikwan, Kwanzan, Hishida, Arai and others of the Nippon Bijistuin, gave him a certain insight into the technical nature of painting, but they never influenced his art as they have done that of other younger artist of India.

A grateful Government offered the aging artist the first chairmanship of the Lalit Kala Akadami, which on account of his ill health, he had to refuse, the President of the Republic of India conferred on him the title of Padma Bhushan for his signal service to Indian art and culture. His one big ambition in life was to see India free, and it must be admitted that he did contribute, in his own way, to the attainment of that freedom.

The Lalit Kala Akadami has also honoured him by bestowing on him its fellowship. In fact it was the first fellowship conferred by it.

In student days Nandalal had seen awarded a cash prize of, Rs.500/- for two paintings 'Sati' and 'Satir Dehatyag' in the first exhibition of the Indian Society of Oriental Art. Nandalal also planned and designed the Ramakrishna Temple at Kamarpukur. He even designed the certificates for the Padma Sri, Padma Bhushan, Bharat Ratna, and other national awards at the request of Prime Minister Nehru. In 1950 D. Litt by Banaras Hindu University Banaras. He retired the Kala-Bhavana and was subsequently made Professor Emeritus. In 1953 he was conferred Padma Vibhushan by the Government of India. In 1954 he was elected fellow of the Lalit Kala Akademi. In 1957 Calcutta University honoured him with a D. Litt., and in 1964, Nandalal was awarded the Tagore Centenary Medal by the Asiatic society, Calcutta. Nandalal Bose died on April 16, 1966 at Santiniketan.

CHAPTER -II

Development of the Bengal School of Arts

CHAPTER - II

DEVELOPMENT OF BENGAL SCHOOL

During the nineteenth century, fine arts declined in the country. Late Mughal and Pahari painting had both exhausted their vitality, the latter even before the earthquake of 1905, which brought ruin to Kangra. There were Government schools of art in the presidency towns, but until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that they were vitalized by the re-discovery of India's ancient artistic wealth till then they could do little to stimulate a truly creative spirit.

Sir Alexander Cunningham, James Fergusson and others had surveyed the monuments of the artistic past, and in 1902, the Archaeological Survey of India was founded the report of which did much to awaken Europe, as well as India, to an appreciation of the beauties of Indian art and the ideals which inspired it. After this, Indian artist too turned for inspiration to the truly native tradition.

Abanindranath Tagore, a cousin of the great poet, became the principal of the school of Art at Calcutta, around him was gradually built up the Bengal school, which included such great names as Nandalal Bose Devi Prasad Roy

Chowdhury, Mukuk Chandra Dey, Bireswar Sen, Sarad a Charan Ukil, Kshitondranath Mazumdar, Goganendranath Tagore, Benode Behari Mukherjee and Asit Kumar Haldar. Each of them derived deriving techniques and inspiration from the some sources, yet each evolved a highly personal style. Several were appointed principals of school of art the country over the new Bengal school influenced art throughout India for several years. However, the school had serious defects also. The effort to recapture the spirituality of earlier Indian art, by men who, in general, were quite unmoved by the emotions which had produced it, led them to mistake sentimentality for spirituality. Besides, they too often negated to cultivate a serious technique, since they despised the matarialism' of western art, but did not fully understand the technique of the earlier Indian artist whom they sought to imitate.

Though the work of the Bengal school could never have represented modern India, it did drew the attention of both India, and the world to the need of an Indian national art, and perhaps hastened its development. The real stimulus to creation came, however, from the re-discovery of the village by the educated Indian, early in the twentieth century.

If the aim of the rising generation of politicians was to alleviate the lot of the peasants, the aim of a whole group among the young and promising artists was to express their sad dignity, to reveal to others the fundamental grace of these emaciated bodies, of the spirit still unbroken by centuries of grinding poverty. The greatest among these rising young artist was undoubtedly Amrita Sher-Gil. A girl of mixed Sikh - Hungarian parentage, and trained in Paris, and therefore, western techniques, she was wholly Indian in spirit, and she herself declared on her return to India in 1934 : 'I realized my real artistic mission then : to interpret the life of Indians, and particularly the poor Indians, pictorially; to paint those silent images of infinite submission and patience, to reproduce on canvas the impression their sad eyes created on me'. The artists whose work influenced her most were not, however, Indians. From Cezanne she learnt to strive for 'simplified naturalism', and from Gauguin, not his sensuality, though this did have affinity with ancient Hindu art, but rather his melancholy.

Strongly reminiscent of Cezanne, yet thoroughly Indian, is the '**Child Wife**', one of Amrita Sher-Gil's best paintings. The subject is sitting in the familiar Indian pose, one knee up, the other leg lying side ways sharply bent at the knee. By elongating the limbs, so

that the raised knee is almost at shoulder - level, the artist has given the impression of childish thinners, further accentuated by the straightness of the startlingly white blouse. But the face above this childish figure is inexpressibly sad, as the large eyes look out from under the long, lank hair - a sadness only to be explained by the title. The thick lips, strongly highlighted, seem to express an almost sulky resentment.

'Hill men', painted in 1935, has straight vertical lines heighten the 'incredible thinness' and the overriding melancholy of the theme. Two turbaned men stand half-facing each other, while a woman, no less melancholy, sits at their feet, the outline of arm and knee no more than suggested under the smooth clothing, just as the form of the men is only hinted at under their enveloping shawls. Here too, the artist arrests the eye by a bold use of pure white in the turban and the pyjama of the younger man, in order to relieve, and at the same time to emphasize, the deliberately featureless dull reds and yellows of the main colour-areas.

Another melancholy group painted at the same period, is '**Hill Women**'. While their dress is the qomeez and tung - Pyjama of the Simla region, detail is absconded, as in the former, by the dupatta or upper cloth draped over the head and across the body, so that all the main

lines of the composition are again vertical. In the figure on the right the treatment of a transparent dupatta is reminiscent of that of Buddha's clothing in the Mathura statues ; almost perfectly regular sweeping lines of white serve to indicate folds.

Other young artists, reacting against the Bengali School, turned to the villages, not only for their subjects, but also for their technique. such, in Bengal, was Jamini Roy. He was born in a village in West Bengal, and received his art training at the Calcutta school. Soon he grew dissatisfied with the academic style and with city life, and turned to the folk-art of Bengal for his inspiration. It was the bazar painting of Kalighat, a suburb of Calcutta, which drew his attention, and around 1925 he began to paint, in the glowing colour and flowing curve of this style, those subjects which really mattered to him. Yet, while the style was daringly simple, composition had all the subtlety of the mature artist. Moreover, he left academic portraiture to the painting of village scenes, especially those of the Santals: disgust with the sordidness of city-life had led him to return to the simple virtues of this primitive people, remembered from his childhood. Around 1931, another change occurred when forsook the sweeping curves of Kalighat for the angular forms and harsh lines of the village artists, or

patuas, and in place of European coloures, adopted the village dyes. At first he continued to paint village subjects, but the magnificent physique of the Santhals was now no longer his concern, and though not a Christian how he turned to the theme of the life of Christ. Later he returned to his earlier style, and to the subject of Bengali village art.

CHAPTER -III

*Life Sketch
of
Nandlal Bose*

CHAPTER - III

LIFE SKETCH OF NANDALAL BOSE

Nandalal Bose was born on 3rd December 1882, at Haveli Khargpur one of the more obscure towns in eastern Bihar. His father was Puranchandra son of Krishnamohan. Nandalal's mother Kshetramonidevi was a godfearing gentle lady wholly devoted to household chores. She had an eye for little things of beauty and would delight young Nandalal by improving toys and dolls with ingenious skill. She was adept in carving clay moulds which were fired and the terracotta moulds were used in stamping impressions on homemade, arts and crafts. Nandalal was the third child in a family of five. The eldest brother was Gokul Chandra and the youngest was Nimai, who was the darling of the family. Kiran and Kamla were his two sisters.

From his early days Nandalal took interest in modelling. Images of Durga, Ganesh and elephants, and bulls, were often on display in fairs and festivals. Decorating Puja pandals or Tazia structures was a form of community work and was probably enthused Nandalal. On his daily rounds to the village school, he would pass potters, carpenters and toymakers working at their crafts. Their intimate understanding of each material

and its character, their skill in manipulating the pater's wheel and virtuosity in the use of clay, or, their ability to use simple instruments like the chisel, was a source of constant delight to Nandalal. Infact, Boses seemingly uneventful childhood was suffused with the flavour of Indian culture. The stories of the Ramayana and Mahabharata seeped his awareness too even as a child.

Nandalal's schooling was chequered by frequent changes and he never felt at ease with the written word or with the logic of numbers. He was more at home with the visual form, and with the tactile sensibility of clay and with the everchanging mystary of seasons. A fairly long training period in the Vernacular middle school at Kharagpur, gave Nandalal some well-needed grounding in the history, arithmetic, and, a reasonably good knowledge of spoken Hindi. Kharagpur Haveli was a district of Bihar and the language of instruction and common speech was Hindi. Apart from this, some of the schools were Muslims; and they provided an Urdu flourish to the Bihari Hindi. Nandalal kept up his Bengali with the help of a tutor specially appointed by his father. This arrangement was felt necessary for the new Bengali families who liked to maintain a link with the mainstream of their own culture.

while his mind journeyed through the wide wild world of fantasy, and words worth's poems got illuminated with drawing of lakes and forests. Since the college was devoted to liberal education and not fine arts, Nandalal failed to earn his annual promotion to the second year.

By this time Nandalal had crossed twenty, and there was a brief and happy interlude when he was married to Sudhirdevi. Nandalal's mother Kshetramonidevi it appears had promised Sudhira devi's mother, that her daughter would be her future daughter - in - law. The marriage was solemnized in June 1903 though by then Kshetraminider was dead.

Sudhirdevi's father Prakash Chandra Pal was a close friend and colleague of Purnachandra and the wedding was celebrated with due pomp and festivity in Calcutta. Sudhiradevi, a young and elegant girl of twelve thus came to be the life - partner of the painter Nandalal. She had an impressive personality. Her fair, tall frame and fine features gave her an engaging presence. She looked taller than Nandalal and in years to come her drive and flair for taking decisions was an asset to the Bose family.

In his did to acquire some kind of qualification Nandalal then joined another college and resumed his studies. Here too, he failed to qualify for promotion.

Nandalal moved to Calcutta in the year 1897, for his high school studies. He started his lessons in the Central Collegiate School, where Khantichandra Ghosh was one of his classmates. Kantichandra who later became famous as the translator of Omer Khayyum was quite a troublesome lad at school. He was always pranks ready to embarrass teachers and students alike. Nandalal though a friend of Kanti, usually remained a passive spectator. He nonetheless showed enthusiasm, and even prompted and encouraged the more volatile Kanti. Life in such collegiate schools was probably rather unimaginative and drab to youths who were not motivated towards academic discipline. Each teacher entered class, and without waiting to sense whether the students were receptive or indifferent began to lecture in a torrent of words. No effort was usually made to engage the students' interest in the academic programme. At the end of each year, examinations were conducted, and the percentage of students passing the examination was each time quite low. The lower this percentage was, the more prestigious was the institution. Such was the academic climate of the time. Nandalal however managed to clear the entrance examination in 1902 and continued his college studies in the same institution. There was not much pleasure in these study sessions and Nandalal literally forced himself to stare at the books of English, Sanskrit, or History,

With renewed perseverance he switched over to Metropolitan college, where again he had to wade through the same course. He would listen to an unending stream of words that flooded the class. The verbal acrobatics of the teacher must have left him a little amused, if not stunned, for title little did it arouse his visual imagination. Here too the same fate awaited his effort at clearing college tests. Disturbed and undecided he wrote to his grand father, that he would like to join an school. His father, then away in Darbhanga, had delegated the responsibilities of guidance to Nandalal's parents-in-law. The reaction to Nandalal's letter was prompt, for, Law, Medicine and Engineering were thought respectable profession for middle class youth. Lawyers were thought more successful because they earned more than political leadership and even journalism were not quite approved.

Reluctantly Nandalal sought admission to the presidency college joining its commerce section in 1905. Here he had to face another set of subjects, all new, all equally boring. Commercial geography, precis-writing, typing, commercial accounting, each more tiresome than the other. He was thoroughly disillusioned and disheartened in his attempts to get a degree and acquaint himself with any semblance of success. The effort to

qualify academically was frustrating and he was already twenty two, and married man.

Now, if his academic studies brought him no pleasure, his pursuits in art kept him busy and enraptured. Between 1897 when he first came to Calcutta for his high school studies, and 1905, when he abandoned all hope of an academic qualification, Nandalal was witness to the multi-levelled renaissance in the cultural life of Bengal. Sri Ramakrishna's passing away in the recent past had not dimmed the lustre and magnetism of his spiritual halo. Swami Vivekananda was then travelling around the world making keenly aware of India and its heritage.

Literary figures like Bankimchandra and Micheal Madhusudan were in the vanguard of this revival, and Rabindranath was its rising star, far by this time Tagore was widely known as poetic phenomenon in India. The literary journal Pravasi had within a short time gained wide circulation among the educated middle class, a class which had succeeded, in its turn, in shaping also the media. Media - moulded political and social awareness became was a power to reckon with. Numerous journals covered a wide area of interests, from political 'delicate and economic analyses, to poetry, history, and studies of ancient texts. Also many known painters and

promising talents found in them a ready forum for, apart from their articles, the journals also reproduced picture plates of their work.

Young Nandalal too looked forward to the new issues of Pravasi. His sole intent was to study the picture plates published in these monthly journals. It was now that his real education began for these reproduced works were edifying encounters for him. Rummaging around old book shops in North Calcutta, he would browse through even foreign illustrated magazines to discover old European masters like Raphael. He often copies some of these plates and thus kept up his practice in painting. However his initial acquaintance with the works of Ravi Varma and Abanindranath was through Pravasi. The monthly magazine in its first year of publication reproduced picture plates of the Ajanta murals done by Ravi Varma. The following year sculptures of Mhatra, and, in the year after that of Dhurandhar, and then of Abanindranath were reproduced.

The painting **Sujata** and the **Buddha** and **Vajra Mukul** by Abanindranath left abiding impressions on the young Nandalal and he started working on similar themes. His own work **Mahaswita** was done under the reigning influence of this master. And, all this he did quietly, in the solitude of his living quarters. His repeated failure at various colleges only

strengthened his will to choose painting as a career. The advice of his elders failed to swerve him from this destined path. Atul Mitra one of Nandalal's cousin lived in the same house, and was studying draftsmanship in the Government Art School. Nandalal started taking lessons from him in model drawing, still life, and others techniques. This was the preliminary training which would equip him to secure admission to an art school. At his academic tether he implored his guardians to give him a last chance to study art, and it was truly the chance of a life time.

A young man in the neighbourhood was also a student in the art school. He would tell his rapt listeners stories about his teacher, especially Abanindranath. Nandalal had already read this master's praise in the press, and news of the award the master had won at the Delhi exhibition of 1902-3 were galore. The catalogue published as a guide to this nest and sprawling show, wrote Abanindranath Tagore of Calcutta sends through the principal of the school of art, Calcutta, three pictures, that were so much appreciated as to receive a silver medal.¹

Nandalal poured over the reproduction of Abanindranath's painting as and when they appeared in Bengali journals. He felt a certain personal affinity

with him, and desired in his heart to win him as his master. He also saw the works of painters like Dhurandhar, Annoda Bagchi, Bama Charan Bandopadhyaya and others, but no chord was touched within him by then. However on seeing Abanindranath's work he felt a thrill of kinship. The men and women in Abanindranath's paintings did not seem to be aliens in native garls, they were individuals of this land. **The Buddha and Sujata, Shahjehan or Nala Damayanti** belonged to this country in flesh and blood, and had natural grace. **Sujata** or **Damayanti** wore the saree with casual ease. In comparison the works of Ravi Varma or Dhurandhar appeared affected and stagey. For Nandalal the decision was simple. Emotionally he had no other choice. He had to pay homage to Abanindranath and accept him as his guru. The youngman, who was a student of the art school, agreed to take him to Abanindranath, and on a fateful day in 1906, Nandalal stood before the master, shy, silent, but full of excitement. Abanindranath looked on with amusement though he marked this with a grave face, and peering through his glasses remarked "Looks like a truant from school; perhaps being unable to study, he wishes to try his hand at art! what have you studied so far?"

"Not school - but - college - failed". "Really I can't believe my ears. I would like to see the certificate".

Thus ending the first encounter. Mustaring courage, Nandalal visited him a second time with a bundle of pictures, drawings and a certificate obtained from the college office. Principal Havell saw them and singled out Nandalal for special mentioned. Nandalal was passed on to Lala Iswariprasad for conducting the usual admission test. Iswariprasad was an accomplished painter of the Patna style. He was well versed in the traditional techniques of miniature painting and was a craftsman adopt at prebariey indigenous colour and brushes of the finest kind. The Lata's employment in the art school was largely due to Principal Havell's insistance that art education in India should more look back to British models, for Indian art he knew had its own roots and its own distinct flavour. Earlier Havele had persuaded Abanindranath to join the art school fratenity by offering him the Vice-Principalship. However Abanindranath was averse to time-bound programmes, regulated attendance, and the conventional discipline of class rooms. Art for him was a quest which flowered in an air of freedom and sponlaneity. Havell, a very sympathetic and kindly disposed Englishman, assured every facility and consideration to this

aristocratic and whimsical genius. Abanindranath was apparent to the perceptive and discerning eye of Havell. Abanindranath too had a great regard for Havell. The rate of Havell in persuading Abanindranath to search out an individual original idiom, free from the ballast of European conventions was evident, and for this, Abanindranath considered Havell his guru.

Nandalal started the admission test with the appropriate ceremony, for all endeavour, according to tradition was to be initiated, with homage to Saddhidata Ganesha. The elephant headed divinity was the traditional shield from mishap and evil, and besides this the divinity bestowed fulfilment, and Nandalal did not wish to make a wrong beginning. After the test Lala Iswariprasad reported "He wields a mature hand" Nandalal thus won the coveted admission.

The programme of studies in this art-school was quite novel different in many respects from other art schools such as those of Bombay or Madras. Havell started a new section calling it the department of Indian arts. The Indian art section evoked considerable adverse criticism from the uninformed press and the public. It was considered a retrograde step designed to keep Indian talent away from modern western techniques of painting and portraiture. However with Havells

pioneering zeal and Abanindranath's achievement in painting including that of a select band of his disciples, the tide turned, and soon admiration got the better of the criticism. The new curriculum now also included various crafts like stained glass, gesso work, frescoe painting, stencil cutting and printing.

For Nandalal, his work spoke more eloquently than his tongue and he became wholly engrossed in his studio. Abanindranath had his own studio in one of the large halls of the school where he painted or instructed. Students had free access to the master, who delighted his audience with anecdotes, mythological tales, and humorous sallies. He was an inimitable conversationalist and much of his teaching or guidance was through such informal talk. What he spoke was more often a soliloquy!

Abanindranath would go round the class and encourage the students to work on their own, from imagination. He frowned on those who preferred the easy way out by copying pictures done by others or working on studies from models in which there was no effort at discovering painterly solutions. Originality was his watch word and he reserved his praise for those who showed invention as well as observation.

The early years of the next decade were filled with excitement. The British decision to partition Bengal was an unkind act causing an emotional injury that stirred the people of the province into a strident protest. Rabindranath too, the doyen of the Bengali intelligentsia, raised his voice against it. He wrote songs and lead marches and processions in the streets of Calcutta.

Abanindranath painted his celebrated work Banga mata at this time. It was later renamed Bharat - Mata by Sister Nivadita. Indian youth was fired with the longing for the glories of free India. Eminent historians like Jadunath Sarkar interpreted Indian history with a sense of pride in the splendour of the past. Nandalal too must have been stirred by this fervour. The atmosphere of the times inspired him to create a distinct personal idiom that grew in response to the national ethos.

By 1906-7 Nandalal was secure on his path and knew 'that there would be no turning back and no difficulties either to dread. He and his colleague Surendranath ganguly were close to their master, who would say with pride that Nando and Suren were his right and left hands, their work was seen, encouraged and critically reviewed. If there were comments or critical

observations they were not intended to harm their desire to excel. After an year of his apprenticeship at the art school. Nandalal appreciated and praised the work of his talented colleague, suren and there was a healthy rivalry between the two. Abanindranath continued with his story telling. In his art school studio, he often recounted tales of Rajput chivalry and romance, and the small circle of his disciples listened in silence holding their breath at the moments of suspense. These tales were part of their instruction. They were expected to inspire the themes and images for the designs of their painting.

Painting thus grew around a thematic content. Form, composition, and colour were just the visible counter-parts of content. The story was as important as the technique of painting. Throughout history, painting has been illustrating in the best sense of the term. Illustration in the etymological sense means to be in light, to be illuminated, to be clear. It is concerned with brightening or making manifest any thing or action. The mural of the **Buddha, Yashodhara and Rahul** with his alms bowl in the Ajanta caves, is an illustration. So are the painting of the various Jataka stories, that adorn the walls there. Similar works characterise the Horyu-ji temple in Japan, the

Tun Huang Caves in China, and, in Ravenna, The Sistine Chapel in Italy. Many great paintings have been illustrations gaining their vitality from their thematic grandeur.

By now Nandalal's painting activity was at its peak. In the exhibition organised by the Indian Society of Oriental Art, he displayed 2 works **Sati** and **Shiva and Sati**. Surendranath Ganguly also exhibited his Flight of Laxman Sen. Both of them won awards of five hundred rupees each - not an inconsiderable sum in those days.

The Indian Society of Oriental Art was an organisation formed in 1907 by some English enthusiasts of Indian culture and few Indian artists and scholars. Sir John Woodroffe, the chief Justice of Calcutta High Court was the moving spirit behind the activities of the society. His principal interest of the society. His principal interest was in the esoteric literature of Tantric cults. Other members of the group were Thornton, an engineer by profession and an amateur painter, and Norman Blunt an influential member of the English Community in Calcutta. Sister Nivedita who was interested in art movements was also a member. The two Tagores, Abanindranath and Gaganendranath, became active members and their works spear headed the newly ushered Bengal School. Ordhendu Coomar Ganguly also became one of the influential member of this society. He later

became editor of the prestigious art journal **Roopam** which was published under the auspices of the Society. Apart from an annual programme of exhibition and publication the society took considerable interest in promoting Indian art and artists.

The award winning painting by Nandalal elicited praise and critical acclaim in several quarters. A report in **La Review**, a Persian fortnightly journal carried the news the Japanese art journal **Koker** published the reproduction of one outstanding painting in water colour, by Nandalal Bose. *La Review* also stated that the previous winter, at the instance of the Oriental society of Art, an exhibition of oriental paintings was shown in Paris, and that a painting titled **Kaikayi** attracted everybody's attention and praise. The examples of the new art movement aroused around interest. It showed a manifest waning of English influence, and an advance towards a national ethos. In art too, India was thought to be heading towards freedom and self-rule.²

The youthful art student Nandalal launched on a pilgrimage to discover India, the land of his birth, and first wished to see the ancient and historical sites of art. He longed to breathe the air that was once breathed by the Buddha, Ashoka, Krishna, and by the monarchs that illumined the pages of Indian History. Nandalal found a

resourceful companion in Priyanath Sinha who was indispensable during the tour because of his tact and contacts with people. Wherever they went Priyanath would search for a suitable host and often find someone who would provide them with hospitality.

The first stop on their itinerary was Patna. Nandalal had learnt that one of the seths, whose name was Jalan had a collection of Rajput and Jain paintings and others art and craft objects. They spent considerable time studying and taking notes of the art treasures on view. From Patna they proceeded to Varanasi. At Varanasi Nandalal did not forget the rituals any Hindu Yearns to perform. They visited the temple of Visvanath and bathed in the sacred Ganges. The Varanasi delighted him, the eternal Ganges, the flights of steps on her banks, the incessant flow of pilgrims chanting their prayers, the ringing temple bells, and the round bamboo umbrellas, standing at varying angles, all this was usually fascinating. Nandalal fell in love with Varanasi. In later years he visited the place again and again, and liked it even more. But the highlight of the first stay was Sarnath, where two thousand years ago the Buddha had preached his **Dhamma Chakra Pravartana**. The Dhameka stupa was in disrepair, but the designs and curving on the waist of the stupa still displayed their

pristine glory. Nandalal's sketch-book was made full sketching its elegant intricacies.

After spending sometime looking around Lucknow, they travelled to Agra. In the presence of the famed Taj Mahal, Nandalal tried to analyse his feelings. The form and structure were doubtless elegant, clear in design and alluring in symmetry. Still, somehow he could not feel within him the thrill of being swept off his feet. The beauty of the Taj Mahal appeared aloof, abstract. It needed the illumination of moonlight to bathe it in an aura of unity. He could understand his reaction later when he visited Sasaram and saw Sher Shah's tomb. Here he was overpowered by the massive magnificence of the structure. There was no allurements of marble but its sheer juxtapositions and counterbalances made the tomb a lasting testimony of Indian architecture.

On the return journey Nandalal stopped in Gaya. His admiration for the Buddha Tathagata, took him to the great temple complex and the ancient Bodhi tree. The railings of Buddha Gaya caught his eye and he made several studies of it. Another major reason for going to Gaya was a religious one, worship and offerings of Pinda³ for the peace of departed ancestors was considered the filial duty of a devout Hindu, and Nandalal did not wish to forget this. He was not bound by Sastric in

sculpture and painting which were expressive activities of the hand and mind. Words seemed only to screen and befuddle the immediacy of vision. But such private unspoken musings were shrewdly camouflage behind a knowing smile.

In next halt, the group visited Madras and the temples in its surrounding districts. The experience of Mahabalipuram was truly profound. Nandalal was stirred by the natural elegance and unadorned dignity of Pallava sculptures, an admiration that was to last all his life. The Pallava and Chola sculptures on the temple facades, the animimitable bronzes of Nataraja, Parvati, Sunderamurti to moved him very deeply.

On his return to Calcutta in September, 1908 Nandalal resumed his studies in the art school. Now his armoury was loaded, and he was in full command of the territory. In his last year of art school studies Nandalal kept up his performance. Many of the paintings of the school of Abanindranath were taken so Simla for the second exhibition of the Indian Society of Oriental Art. This exhibition was planned to bring the works of the new movement to the notice of a wider community of art connoisseurs. Abanindranath's paintings illustration the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam were the Chief attraction of the show. Simla, a popular hill station was the summer

On his return from Bagh, he rejoined Kala-Bhavana and began to organise the department in right earnest. From the academic year of 1921-22, one does not come across the name of Asitkumar in Asram Sangbad of Santiniketan Patrika, and it is not clear whether he continued to work as a regular member of the staff. Asitkumar however left on a six-month study-tour of England with William Peurson and Nagendranth Ganguly, the poets son-in-law. When Asitkumar returned from Europe, received a letter from the Visva Bharti authorities saying that he need not join.

With Nandalal in harness, a regular department of art studies began taking shape. The initial group of students that had gathered around him were Hirachand Dugar, Ordhendukumar Bandopadhyay and Ramendranath Chakravarti. They had in fact come along with Asitkumar in 1919. The department also included Binodabehari Mukhopadhyay, Vinayak Masoji, Veerbhadur Rao Chitra, Srimati Hathi Singh, Ramesh Basu, Sukumari Devi and Pratima Devi.

The year of suspense passed with some psychological tensions and embarrassments, but finally with the rewarding association and help of Rabindranath, Vidrusekhar Sastri, Kshitimohan Sen, Jugadanada Roy and Kulimohan Ghosh, he found his place in Santiniketan, a niche he was destined to crown with glory.

Another major influence on Nandalal was that of Mahatma Gandhi. Here was a man simple as a peasant, truthful as a saint, logical as a lawyer and yet so human and full of composition. "This little man of poor physique had something of steel in him, something rock-like. There was royalty and Kingliness in him which compelled a willing obeissance from others". Nandalal's first encounter with the tiny man of lofty soul, was in Santiniketan during the latter's visit to the Asram in September 1920.

Nandalal's first acquaintance with Japan was through the prestigious art journal in which his early master-piece **Sati at the pyre** was reproduced by a novel process of chromography in which place of litho stones, wood cut blocks were used. His work had earned encomiums in art circles. The visits of the Japanese master Taikan and Hiside around 1903, could not have come to his notice at the time as he was then outside the sphere of influence of Abanindranath, struggling to cross the thorny burriers of academic examinations. Later however, he had the opportunity of meeting count Okakura in 1912 and could then get a glimpse of Japanese sensibility through the latter's comments on art, aesthetics and life. Still later Arai Kampo became an associate of the Vichitra studio, and Nandalal were also together during the Puri

stay, Arai's companion ship led to a renewed interest in Far Eastern art. When Rabindranath invited Nandalal to join him on a tour of China and Japan, Nandalal agreed with alacrity. After this tour, he visited Jawa and Sumatra with Rabindranath in 1927.

By nature Nandalal was affable but generally took sometime to overcome his reliance. There after, however, he was delightful company. Among his friends were his school-mates Royshekher Basu and Surendranath Ganguly.

Santiniketan gave him the companionship of many distinguished colleagues but he was more often seen with Tejeshchandra Sen. Tejes was a teacher of English, Bengali and Botany. Trees and flowers had their own personality and both Nandalal and he were lovers of nature and gardening. Another person with whom he was close was Nityananda Goswami generally called Gosainje. He wore a beard instead of the tradition at tuft on the head. He was a scholar of Pali and Sanskrit. But for Nandalal it was not his erudition that mattered, he loved the human, sincere unassuming personality and open heart in his friend. Nandalal's choice of friends gives us some idea of his values.

full of natural grace and had great consideration for the needy and the deprived. If at any time he gave vent to his irritation and ire, in the presence of students for their lapses, he would return after some time and smile away the damage done by suggesting that one should blame the mindless mood and not the man who is always human behind the mask of irritation! He was ever generous towards other's failures and seldom indulged in gossip or sumour.

Honours started coming one after the other during the last fifteen years of his life. Doctor of letters, medals, Desikottama, Padma Vibhushan, Dadabhai Nauroji Memorial prize, and fellowship of various learned bodies like the Lalit Kala Akademi, The Asiatic Society. The Academy of Fine Arts. Silver Jubilee Medal, and many more strung in a veritable garland. Yet he remained unattached like the Vedic bird which sits on its high perch observing without participation the antics of its alter-ego.

His wife Sudhiradevi understood the demands of this genius. She felt that Nandalal in his evening years needed to be mentally and emotionally alone. She remained near enough but a little apart to allow Nandalal to meditate through his work. Almost everyday he would sit with a fresh paper before him, and allow his hand to

press all over India. Binodebehari Mukharjee's comments on his guru's passing away voices what all those who came in contact with Nandalal felt: 'I have not yet been able to get over the feeling of loss which was akin to witnessing a familiar and mighty tree blasted by a storm and lying uprooted. History will remain witness to his creative powers. The future will rejoice over it. Biographies will be written. Only, men of the future will miss the human touch of Nandalal's exceptional personality'.⁵

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CHAPTER -IV

*Major Artistic
Achievements of
Nandlal Bose*

CHAPTER - IV

MAJOR ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF NANDALAL BOSE

(a) NANDALAL'S VIEWS ON ART

Nandalal was frank and modest about his inability to express himself in speech. Nandalal had no illusions about his ability to teach, or Rabindranath's capacity to learn methods or techniques. The aging poet was fond of teasing his younger friend by imploring him to teach the poet art. Now Nandalal was also familiar with the latter's total aversion to discipline. Rabindranath had sought freedom from establishments that insisted on grammar, musical scales, philosophical schools or techniques of art. He was by nature a loner and an adventurer, who learnt by act of creating classroom lessons, study by rote, the conventional teacher - disciple relationship, all this seemed to him a tedious waste of time and sensitivity. The very idea of a Santiniketan was based on an organically natural development of individuals, each unique in his or her own way, willing to learn in an atmosphere of enquiry. Nandalal, therefore, wisely chose a smiling silence. This was because the painter was of a different mould. He had faith in the teacher - disciple relationship.

He leasfowed a study of techniques and got in return faith or 'sraddha' from his students. The teacher artist had to be generous and paternal towards his students. He had to try to understand, help and encourage what he conditioned the best in them. To Nandalal's mind, conditioned by influences of Swami Vivekananda, Abanindranath, Havell and Coomarswamy, Rabindranath's paintings should have been initially a dismaying experience, but when the initial shock wore off and when Nandalal was able to disengage his vision from his habit of carrying the measuring scale of tradition did see the worth was of Rabindranath's art. The poet himself was unsure about his effort at painting till the very end. He did not ever feel on firm ground. Far all the praise and critical writing of friends and admirers he had little confidence in himself. However, Nandalal's smiling silence was always one of comprehension.

Nandalal's stray musing on art were numerous, in them he expressed his aims in pithy word pictures. Some of these are cited below -

Subject of art and the mind of the artist are like an object and light. Matter absorbs the sun's light, that is the nature of imitative art, while a glass, mirror or water reflect light; that is the nature of Indian or Eastern art. This art did not tread the Path¹ of imitation, nor did it need to be abstract or be

afraid of imitation. It's truth exists between the form and the formless.

— Paintings have two aspects : expression and architecture. The artist should know the currents and styles of the various tradition. He may use whatever is necessary according to his desires. The artist is an Emperor. All styles and techniques are aides attending, following or serving him. Each may become his commander-in-chief, minister, queen, prince, councillors or take any other role.

— Under the limitless sky everything grows, takes birth, dies and is born again. Incessant change from one form to another moves in an evolutionary cycle. If one can assess these transformation, one can be nature's poet or nature's painter. The great chinese painters were able to do this aright.

— There is a secret skill of drawing : while drawing a tree, if one is lost in innumerable details and complexities one should abandon the attempt. One has to see it against its sky. Only then one discovers that the form seen against it is in our grasp automatically. Then one has found its real structure and shape. It's 'swarup'² is achieved.

— When I compare my painting with Gurudev's, I find mine lack lustre and are lifeless. Formal beauty, grace

clarity, florescence all these have been attained. Now what is needed is life force, strength and vitality. If it was not for our students I would have stopped painting and taken up sculpture, working on images alone. Whatever I have drawn, three fourths of it is nothing. I have drawn a man like man, a tree like a tree, they were not transformed into painting. Pats appear better.

— Gardens are of two kinds when one sees the first kind, one feels there is a gardener or worker. While the other type makes up conscious of a lover. Have you not noticed how girls appear just after their marriage? How different they look? One can see they have entered into a relationship with some special person. Art is like that. In good art there is no force no violence.

The child draws in natural simplicity, because its knowledge and means are limited. A mature artist also reaches simplicity because his knowledge and understanding are extensive. He knows what he wants, and the material and techniques necessary. He also knows their limitations. If he wishes to create an image, he carves off wood, or stone or models clay with only one aim. He says : "you may stay wood or stone or clay. But you must also take any stamp and express my inner self". Good art is all three : subject, material and the artist himself.

— Where can we find a thing emptied of its Sadrisya³? Even if we chance upon it in meditation or gnostic awareness, how can we see or show it? And what joy can be there in such viewing? Sadrisya is not a smile nor is it a decoration. It is not something to elaborate or fuss over, it is not a colourful novelty. It is much deeper and inward, when you strike a string of the Sitar, several others resonate. The resonance enriches the music. 'Sadrisya' is that. You cannot will it resonates of its own accord.

— In art, there is nothing proper or absence. It is far above the mundane. The artist's vision is a worshiper's vision. The artist's offering is like a prayer. He is not to accept his own offering. His part is to give, to express and to create.

— The Mahout urges the elephant with a prod. There he opens wound. He does not let it heal. He merely touches it with the end of the good. It is the same with the artist. he goes about with a wound, with pain. It is not depression or unhappiness, without pain there is no art.

— Hokusai used to say : one who cannot walk, how can he run? one who cannot run, how can he dance? Drawing is like walking, formal technical skill is like running, and painting real masterpieces is like dancing.

exhibits of Rajput and Pahari paintings. Under Abanindranath of course he began his career of painting original pictures. The political aim during these years (1905-8) was charged with enthusiasms for 'Swadeshi', protests against the partition of Bengal, and, a general feeling of pride in one's own heritage! led the artist to work on themes like 'Bharat Mata', 'Saraswati', 'Sati' 'Ganesha'. Most of Nandalal's work at this time was done in a free and extempore manner of drawing forms. There was no effort or attempt to refer them to the absorbed models. Sati or Saraswati were variations of earlier figures of Abanindranath, Ravi Verma, Or of Rajput painters.

Lady Herringham an elderly woman who was a careful and meticulous artist had known Principal Havell as a friend of her husband and also as an enthusiast of Indian art. After seeing Griffith's copies reproduced in the volume on Ajanta, she felt that the reproductions were probably not faithful to the originals, primarily because the medium used in copying was oil. The murals in the caves of Ajanta were in water-tempra. Oil was a heavy medium and not easily emenable to the free movement of the brush. With Hevell's encouragement, Lady Herringham undertook to make fresh copies of these murals. She travelled to

India with two assistants, Miss Durothy Larcher and Miss Like, with the firm objective in her project of resuscitating the murals. She wanted the some Indian painters should benefit by such studies too. As one of the active associates of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, she prevailed on the society to sponsor Nandalal and Asitkumar for copying assignments under her. Sister Nivedita was a resolute woman and after arranging for their travel tickets and incidental needs, she sent them to Ajanta. The expenses on their account were borne by Abanindranath and Gaganendranath. Nandalal and Asit Kumar reached. Ajanta and joined Lady herringham's team there. The Nizam's government had arranged for their lodging and security. Ajanta, in those days was a remote hill area far away from urban centres. The forests around necessitated guards at the caves and at the camping sites.

The propund beauty of the Ajanta murals overwhelmed Nandalal the moment he saw them. Nothing he had seen earlier was comparable to these waves of visual form, that appeared to emerge and recede on the dimwalls of the deep resonating caves. In the still silence of the interiors a profound drama, an intensely unique experience was unfolded, spreading from corner to corner, on the ceilings and over the pillars in colours, in

Nivedeta accompanied by the Scientist Jugadish Chandra Bose, Abala Bose and Ganen Brahmachari visited the Ajanta camp and made enquiries about their food and comfort. The sister left behind Ganen Brahmachari popularly known as Maharaj, to look after the arrangements. Christmas ended in a mood of exhilaration. The artist spirits were revived and they picked up their brushes with renewed vigour. Lady Herringham's response to these murals was characteristics.

As the groups work gathered momentum, two more artists from Calcutta were requisitioned. Venkatappa and Sameredranath Gupta, both disciples of Abanindranath. Ajanta, in lose days, was visited only by distinguished people. It had not turned into a tourist haunt, where school - Children were taken in file. During their stay, the Governor of Bombay two visited the caves, and the police had to be safe for the gubernatorial visitor. The Bengali appearance of the Calcutta group was itself suspect. For the police, every Bengali was a terrorist. There had been several incidents all over the country and some high English officials had fallen victim.

lady herringham was told that during the period of the Governor's visit, the Bengali should be sent away to a camp on a distant hill. At first they to leave for her sake, and in order to assuage their feelings, went

part of the way with them. The first camp at Ajanta came to a close after three months of sustained team work by the six artists and Lady Herringham herself. It was indeed a rewarding experience and an unforgettable lesson for Nandalal.

The visit to Ajanta gave a fresh orientation to his work, as it furnished him with prototypes for his iconography and methodology in building forms in volumetric units. But there was always a danger of listless repetition, a certain habit of imagery learnt by rote, when the forms of iconography had no feedback from live experience. Abanindranath had received training in such drawing from observation, under Gilhardi and Palmer, such studies from studies from models were primarily exercises in perception. The eye tried to capture the flux of light and shade playing over the figure. In such a process the artist's eye paced between the model and the drawing board, carefully marking the outline as it emerged in a mesh of Chiaroscuro. Abanindranath's studies had the academic background of European art. This discipline which gave an individual flavour to Abanindranath's work, was not considered a part of artist's training and equipment in the revived syllabus of the art school. Abanindranath allowed each student to evolve in his own way. His only dictum was,

The years 1927-28 mark the period when he began gleaning the rich harvest of his sustained work. Nandalal's sketching was an inalienable adjunct of his daily life. The morning sun would find him leisurely moving in the garden, observing santhals with sticks or baskets, doves and ducks, he would take notes, sketch visual panorama, many of which instantaneous records finished and complete. Some, he would work on in his studio, when the memory - image was fresh and notes and sketches made on the spot would awaken it and lead it to a finish. In any ashrama picnic or tour it was a familiar sight to find Nandalal sitting and gossiping, but, intent on things happening around and sketching. Each participant of the picnic would get an autographed sketch, as a souvenir and in appreciation of his being the chosen member of the event. The number of such sketches, given for the asking, given for participating, given in reply to his student's letters would be incalculably large.

Nandalal, as found in *Modern Review* Prabasi, or, Times of India Publication on the Buddha series, is only a popular and partial, and therefore in a handicapped image of his powers. Much of his strength and sensitive wealth finds expression in the spontaneity of his sketches. They are a veritable treasure of shrewd observation, powerful calligraphy, psychological insight,

rich sallies of humour, and empathic portrayal of the flora and fauna. The real Nandalal, it is felt, still awaits discovery.

Back in Santiniketan he started organising the activities of Kala Bhavana. Education in art was taken up in right earnest. For this, he organised groups to paint murals on the modest building that were built with the generosity of the Jamsaheb of Nowanagar and the Rana Sahab of Porbunder. Thus we find that the states of Gujarat and Saurashtra were foremost in their respect for Rabindranath and in offering economic aid.

He had seen how the Master of Ajanta and Bagh wielded their brush, to express volumetric conceptions and the plenitude of human or animal forms. He was, therefore, well-equipped to start with wall-painting when the art classes moved from Santoshialayer to the first floor of the former library verandah. Here he began his first experiments in murals, an interest which was last him all his life. He decided to confront walls as a painting space and see what could be achieved. In the Government Art School in Calcutta there was the small mural panel, Kacha Devayani, done by Abanindranath. That mural was actually an enlargement of a small picture, it did not possess the feel that a mural should have the two figures in the panel appeared decorative and

an arrangement of blocks. This treatment of space was generally characteristic of his imaginative figure-composition.

However, in pictures that had their source in observed reality, especially landscapes, visual perspective was freely used, and, recession recorded without any ambiguity.

Nandalal generally preferred clarity of statement, and, because of this predilection, he, in course of time, abandoned the wash technique, where the colour washes lend to create a hazy and indeterminate atmosphere. Nandalal took the painting in tempera which was more suitable for formal clarity and defined statements.

Nandalal's respect for the infinite variety of nature was one of the major factors that forced him out of the world of myths and legends. During his Silaidah vacation he was deeply moved by the vast spectacle of the river Padma. The work of Mukul Dey who was with him, interested him. Day had learnt the skill of making on the spot-sketches. Thus we find Nandalal alternating between two kind of technique. One was formal as in his paintings Draliksha or, Swornakumbha, where there is elimination of detail and an emphasis on the silhouette.

In such painting his drawing attains the tension of a rightly tuned string instrument. The background has the function of setting off the figure. The other technique was characterised by free brush work as in his paintings of the landscapes of Almora and others places, where the emphasis is on nature and atmosphere. A number of Santiniketan landscapes with their red roads, huts and roadside-grass and trees, also belong to this genre where there are hardly any times.

A more playful masterly handling is seen in his Haripura posters. In these, the background consists of bold patches of colour over which he drew a single figure or melif. The bright colours of the subject is defined by fluent brush strokes in black, or, any others contrasting colour.

Nandalal's paintings are of great range and show his acquaintance with many phases of world art, including Egyptian, Arryan, and far eastern. He however, kept aloof from western styles partly perhaps due to his spirit of nationalism. His familiarity with Japanese art and artists made him conscious of the importance of line. Drawing was a definition, a distillation of form. Through line several individual variation of form were brought together, condensed, simplified and expressed in a general, universal statement. However, Nandalal was

far too versatile a worker to persist in a single technique or pictorial solution. Besides his experiments in style he tried different kinds of ground as a base for painting. A consummate craftsman, he was aware that the material used is a major chord in the pictorial symphony. The ground on which the artist works, if he is sensitive to its prompting, governs the style.

In his last years, when he was confined to his house through physical debility, he continued to play with forms tearing small pieces of brown paper into shapes and pasting them into a white ground. Thereafter, with a few daft suggestion of pen, or, brush he would give these forms life and meaning. Towards the end he contented himself by drawing a few basic shapes, such as a circle, triangles or lines. These had no reference to reality but were simply forms with their own identity.

(C) NOTES ON HIS CREATION

Early Years - Awarded for two paintings, **Sati and Satis Dehatyag** in the first exhibition of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, **Damayantir Sivayanvarn** acquired for the art school collection, **Chaitanya** at Bose of the Garuda Pillar, **Ahalya** Redeemed and **Siddhiartha** with the wounded swan, in tempera he made a set of 26 illustrations of the Ramayana which now are part of the Kasturba collection.

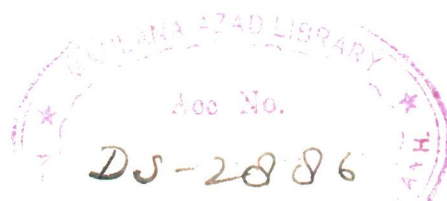
1915-1920 - He was attracted for a while by the Kalighal 'Pats' and during his visit to **Silaidah** in 1916 at Poet Tagores's invitation, also did some quick sketches, influenced by his England - returned artist - friend, Mukul Dey. The river Padma and its sconic beauty also enchanted him. Better known pieces done during the period are - **The cranes over the Padma in winter (wash)** **Rain washed Konerk (wash)**, **Kol Dance (drawing)** **Santal Dance (lithoprint)**, and sketches based on the Mahabharata, for the panels intended for the basu Vijnan Mandir, Calcutta, at the instance of sister Nivedita.

1920-1938 - Since moving to Santiniketan in 1920, both in output and range, the Nandalal started showing an interesting change. If **Uma's Penance**, **Santiniketan Horizon**, **Arjun's Penance**, Portrait of C.F. Andreus, **Siva Taking Poison** happened to be in wash, tempers painting included **Jaba**, **Pwe Dane**, **Veena player** and many more known pieces, in addition to **Mandira Dance of Kathiawar (Pen & Ink)**, **Buddha and Lanb (Print)**, **Dandi March (Linocut)** Tree planting ceremony (woodcut) as well as numerous illustrations of Tagore's poems. This phase also had Nandalal do more mural paintings including the Birth of chaitanaya (Jaipuri technique) at Santiniketan, and, **Hala Karshan (Italian fresco technique)** at Sriniketan.

fresco

Apart from winning recognition from different quarters (Cf Tagore's tribute, call from Gandhiji for decorating the Congress Pandal, the winning of a gold medal at the Lucknow exhibition etc.) he became a source of artistic inspiring in Santiniketan itself where besides being a teacher to his students, he succeeded in bringing about a new aesthetic awareness and a creative atmosphere in crafts design and costume and stage decor for **Natir Puja**, **Tapati**, and festive decorations. During this period, the **Karu Sangla**, was founded. It was an artists cooperative, which promoted the cause of crafts, under the Nandalal's able stewardship.

1938 onward - The year 1938 marked Nandalal the artist's at his peak, now both in concept and final expression. Some 85 posters done for the Haripura Congress of the Indian scene (P.T.O) certainly brought new laurels for him. **The Buddha Series**, and landscapes depicting Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Tagda depicted no less a new flowering. Other important works of the period include **Chautanya's** Pilgrimage (tempera), **Dolon Champa** and **Arjun reclining** (silk), the **Goat** and the **Tomarima Tree** (Prints), **Khowai** (coloured drawing), and **Ardhanariswara** (wash). Wall-paintings received comparatively more attention. Mention should also be



made of **Natir Puja** (China Bavana, Santiniketan) and, of panels on the Mahabharata episodes, as well as on the life of Mira Bai which are at the Kirti Mandir (Baroda) as also the Dinanlika (at Santiniketan) Again, his interest, involvement designing and preparation of the model of the Ramakrishna temple and Memorial at Kamarpukur also should be mentioned. Indeed his interest, was wide ranging. Publications covering his lectures, views on art and relevant matters, and including **Selpasadhana, Silpakutha** and a monograph on Phulkari, point to yet another aspect of his talent. Sending cards and sketches to students and friends continued almost till the end, when he stopped painting due to failing health. Sketches (and paper cut callagas) of the last few year, done 1916 onwards, number over 800.

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CHAPTER - V

Description of Paintings

CHAPTER - V

DESCRIPTION OF NANDALAL'S PAINTINGS

1. Nauka Vihar

There are four figures in this painting Lord Krishna is the main attraction in the background a large boat. It is done in wash and tempera medium. In 1909 it was kept in National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi.

2. Sati

She is Lord Shankar's first wife. The myth behind Sati was that she felt insulted when her husband was not invited in a gathering. She sacrificed her life by falling into the Agni Kund.

The painting has thus highlighted this myth. This painting is in wash medium. It was in 1907 kept in National Gallery. This was Nandalal Bose's early painting.

3. Bina Badini

Tempera on paper

This is one of the successful Hripura posters in which Nandalal use of broad patches of colour areas knet together by playful accents of black and dark lines. The girl playing on Veena it show in an admirably these statement, show of details.

4. Coconut Painting

This painting is in tempera technique. In this painting a lady is shown collecting coconuts. There are many trees and a Boat in the background. It was 1946 kept in National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi.

5. Illustration for Sahajpath Linocut

An illustration for Sahaj-Path a primer for children. It is a linocut showing a child pulling a goat. The design is worked with bold divisions of blacks and whites and communicates its message with a touch of humour.

6. Illustration for Sahaj - Path

Illustration for Sahaj-Path. It is a Lino-cut print in which a women is cooking. It is in Black and White. It was in 1930 kept in National Gallery of Modern Art New Delhi.

7. Illustration for Sahajpath

It is also an illustration for Sahajpath. it is a linocut print. It is folk dance which came into limelight by efforts of Rabindranath Tagore. It is in Black and White. It was in 1930 kept in National Gallery of Modern Art New Delhi.

8. Illustration for Sahajpath

This is a linocut print done in black and white. There is two wolves standing in this painting. It was in 1930 kept in National Gallery of Modern Art New Delhi.



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Plate No. 1

Nauka Vihar.



Plate No. 2.

Sati.



Plate No. 3.

Bina Badini.

Plate No. 4.

Coconut painting





Plate No. 5

Sahaj-path

Linocut

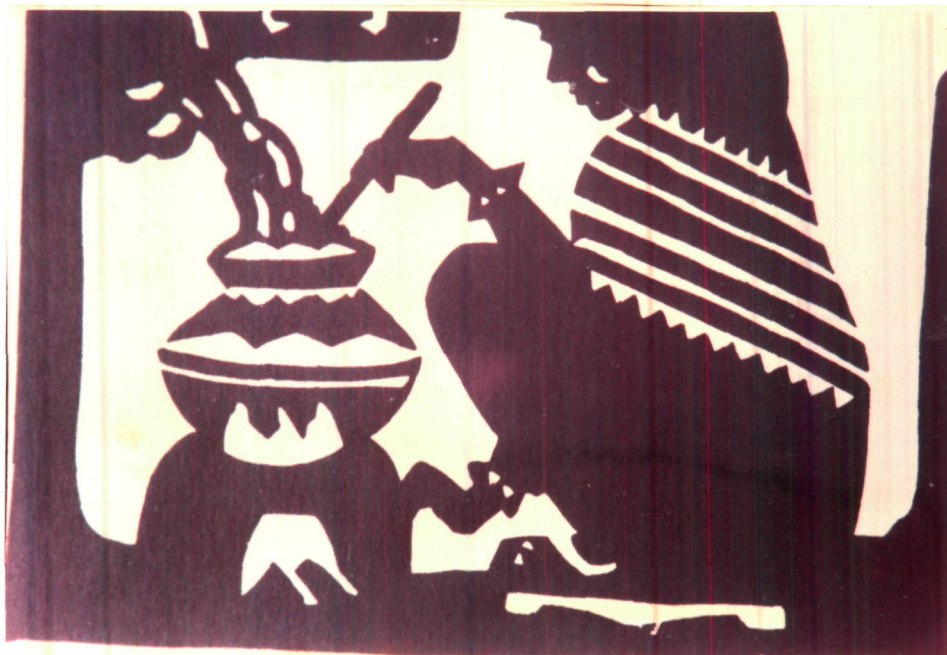


Plate No. 6

Sahaj-path Linocut



Plate No. 7.

Sahaj-path
Linocut.

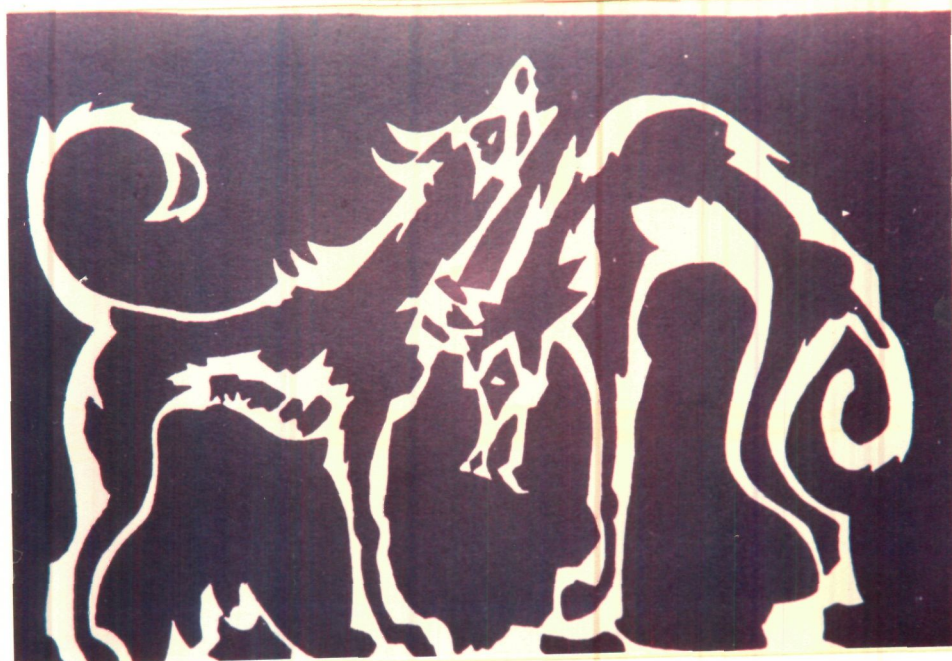


Plate No. 8.

Sahaj-path Linocut.

DESCRIPTION OF MY OWN PAINTING

1. Nature

I have painted the relationship of nature and individual. In this painting there are two young ladies in the background and a main figure in the centre. This is an oil painting on canvas.

2. Struggle

In this painting I have shown struggle of survival of an individual. The result of this struggle is tension in which the individual is drowned deep down. I have painted the background in scarlet red to show the intensity of the tensions and struggle and the figure is in dark green and brunt umber. It is an oil on canvas.

3. Interested

Village scene is shown in this painting a grandmother with children around him are sitting on a cot. Where there is interest the person is willing to do anything as these children are shown in the painting. oil on canvas.

4. Dance of Rajasthan

I have painted the dancing Rajasthani ladies, and the people are watching their dance with keen interest the desert scene is shown in the background. Oil on Canvas.

5. Education

In the painting I have painted children studying with their mother in lantern light. I would again say where there is will the person will do anything for it.

Oil on canvas.

6. Shakuntala

There is Shakuntala sitting with her Sakhi's doing her hair style and she is watching it in the water. There is a beautiful deer by the side of Shakuntala and a girl is watching her. I have tried to paint it in the style of Raphael & Rambrandt.

Oil on canvas.

7. Bua

This model had a dark complexion I have tried to balance the portrait with my colour schema and brush strokes.

Oil on paper.

8. Sheeza

She is a good looking model but unfortunately. I was unable to paint her as she is, this a life portrait in oil colour on sheet.

9. Life Sketch

This model had dim complection. This portrait was also done in oil colour. The clothes are painted in red and green, the background in blue and yellow.

10. Life Sketch

This is a child model. He had a charming face oil on canvas.

11. Kaba

I have painted the Kaba Sharif. In the painting there is a colourful composition and balance.

12. Landscape

In this landscape I have painted boats in the river, there is a colourful sky. There is a reflection of boats in the water. This is in oil colour on paper.

13. Landscape

This landscape is in water colour. There are trees in a Jungal and a path is shown between the trees. There is a figure shown, going into the forest.

14. This landscape is also in water colour have painted boats in the river Ganges. The boat has been painted in green. I have boats in the background also, to show distance.

15. New Hall's Gate

I have painted the New Hall's Gate, in which I resided during my education. This is entrance of I.G. Hostel and a road going further inside.

16. Nandalal Bose

This is a portrait of Nandalal Bose. It is done in line cut print painted in black and white.

17. This is a lithograph print. There is a figure trying to pass through flooded area, there are poles by the side of the road. This is also done in black & white.

18. There are two trees shown in this lithograph print. It is done in black and white.

19. Fish

This is a wood cut print. I have printed into two colours. There are fishes shown in water.

20. This still life is done in etching I have done it
Black and white.



Plate No. 1.

Nature

Plate No. 2

Struggle

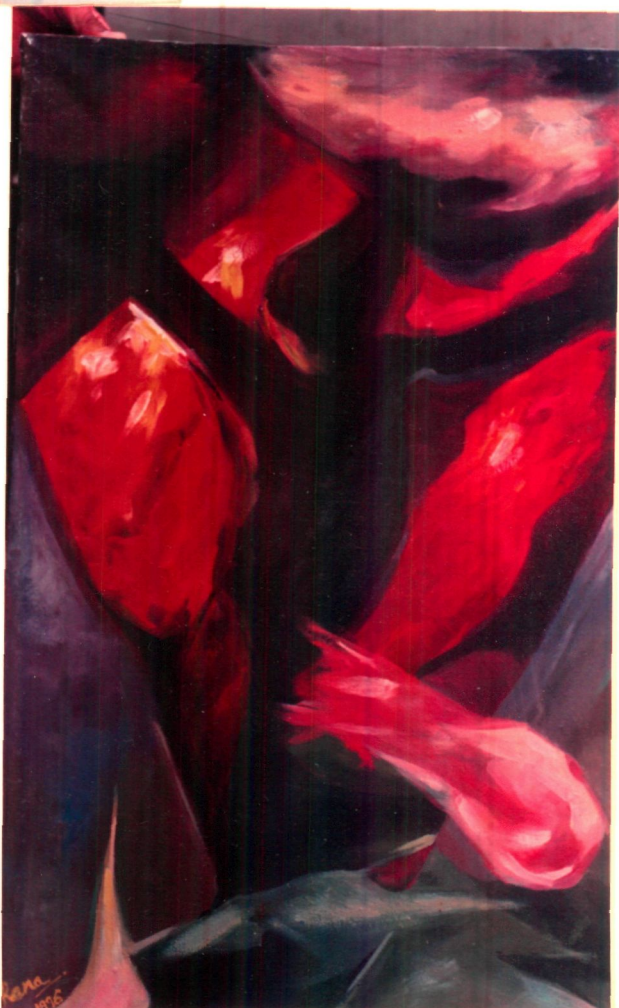




Plate No. 3

Intrested.



Plate No. 4.

Dance of Rajasthan.



Plate No. 5

Education.

Plate No. 6

Shakuntla .





Plate No. 7

Bua .

Plate No. 8

Sheeza .

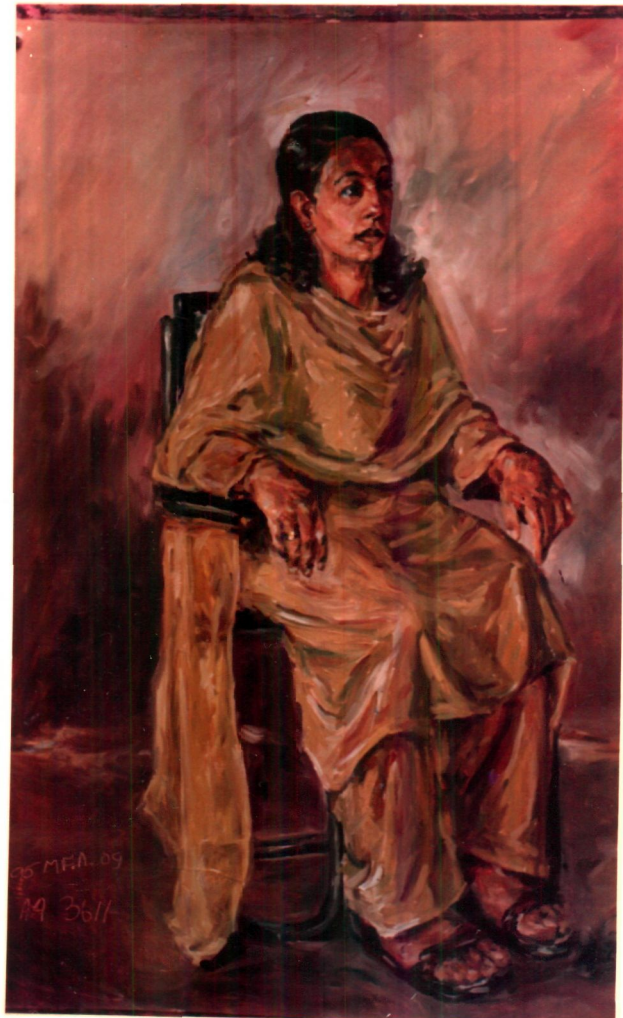




Plate No. 9

Life Sketch.

Plate No. 10.

Life Sketch.





Plate No. 11

Kaba.

Plate No. 12

Landscape .



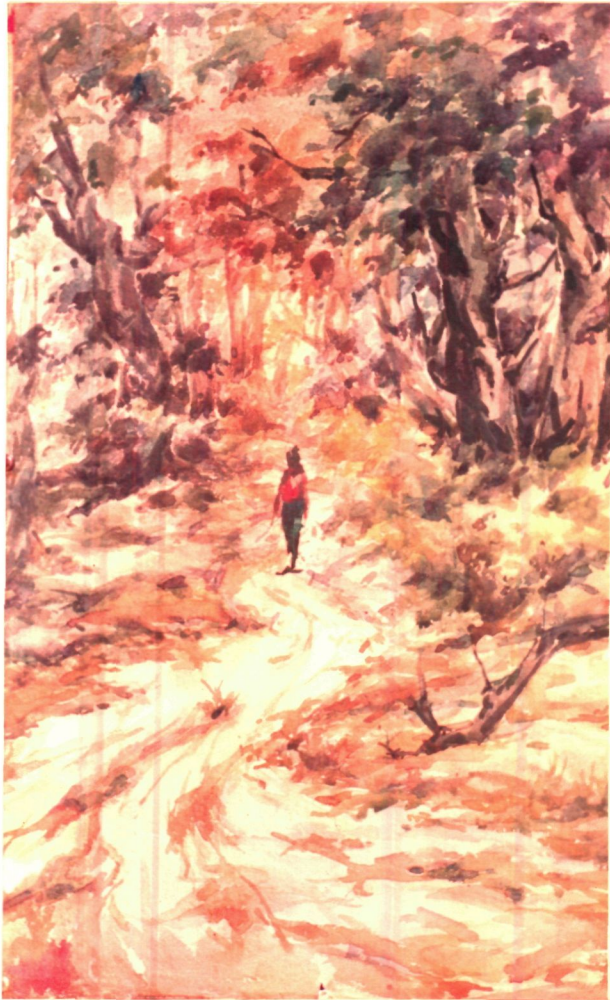


Plate No. 13

Landscape .

Plate No. 14.

Landscape .



Plate No. 15

New Hall Gate



Plate No. 16.

Nandlal Bose.



Plate No. 17 .

Lithograph .

Plate No. 18 .

Lithograph .



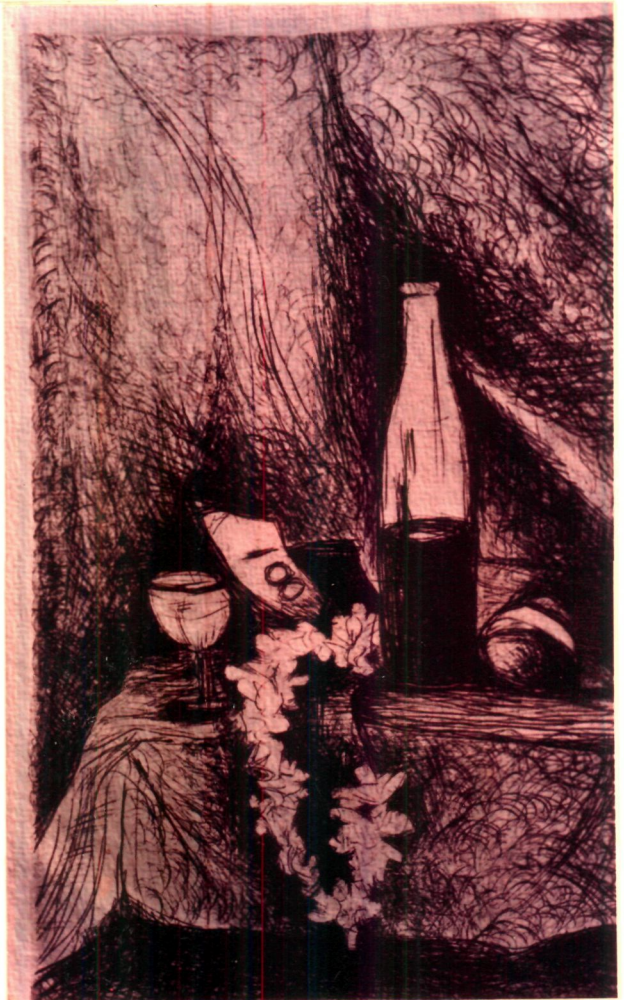


Plate No. 19.

Woodcut .

Plate No. 20.

Etching.



Conclusion

CONCLUSION

One of the foremost figures in the modern renaissance of Indian painting and unquestionable the most popular of Indian artist is Babu Nandalal Bose, the head of the Kalabhavan at Santiniketan. Born in 1885, he was not only the leader of the so called Bengal school of painting but was also recognised as one of the master-artists of the world.

He had not the eclectic genius of his master Abaninranath Tagore, but he has in abundance the creative genius of a master mind. He is distinctly himself and has not allowed any style or school of painting to influence him except his own country's classical art of Ajanta.

His journey to Japan with the poet Rabindranath Tagore and his close association with the foremost artists of the country, and especially with the leaders of the Japanese renaissance, Taikwan, Kwanzan, Hishida, Arai and others of the Nippon Biyistuin, gave him a certain insight into the technical nature of painting, but they never influenced his art as they have done that of other younger artist of India.

Nandalal's art is typical of the Hindu genius, his great works show the sculpturesque effect of the ancients. Nandalal has a poor personality for an artist and looks more like a thriving and contented businessman. But here, as in other things, appearances are deceptive.*

Apart from religious sentiments and theological superstition, it is indeed too much to expect from an educated modern Indian any interest or admiration for 'Puranic' stories rendered in state and worn-out pictorial forms. One cannot forever go on ruminating on the self-same forms of Shiva, Vishnu, Lakshmi or Rama and Krishna. If the ideas and concepts underlying those images have not lost all their potentialities and are dynamic with new values for our present and future life, then the artist, in order to reawake new interest in the people, must create new forms and shapes with a significant purpose and meaning.

"When the form gets worn out and its contents are worth preserving, we should not discard the contents, but find a new vessel in which to deposit the old life, and it is the function of the artist to find new embodiments for great national ideals and aspiration".

Nandalal's unique contribution to modern art lies in that direction.

The Lord of the universe, Mahadev, is described in the ancient Hindu books as not only a Maha Yogee (Prince of Ascetics) but also as Nataraja (The King of Dancers) and Nandalal has given to the modern world his own version of these two aspects of Shiva in his paintings. They are a distinct contribution to the iconographical art of India, at once original, simple and suggestive.

His greatest characteristic feature, as an artist, is the dynamic vitality of his lines. In this, he is the nearest to the Ajanta masters, in fact he is the most Ajanthan among modern Indian painters. He has been deeply influenced by this art of ancient India. We see it in every detail of Nandalal's art. Not that he has no originality he has that in abundance.

In fact it is given to few artists to invest well-known themes with the charm and the freshness of a new conception, and the Nandalal has coined new types from the richness of his imagination and the inner vision of his soul. But rightly also has he used the thousand and one forms and figures, gestures and attitudes, poses and postures and other details of ornamentation, which

those masterminds of Ajanta conceived, evolved and designed from the spacious depths of their spiritual consciousness.

This visualisation of conceptual types and their spontaneous projection on the walls in terms of line and colour, this coming of forms from the inner vision, untrammelled by the limitations of any objective model or cramping convention, was the distinguishing feature of the art of Ajanta. Nandalal's special contribution to modern art is this recreation of the forgotten art-tradition of India.

His great master piece "Shiva mourning over Parawati" is a work to be ranked with a best painting ever done by any master under any divine. What is expressed and to be seen in the picture is much less than what is indicated to the imagination. It is a picture to be contemplated upon, it is a work of an inspired mood. The attenuated form of the seated Shiva, with metal locks, serpent coiled round the neck, with the introspective - looking eyes, vibrant with life, yet self-composed with an inward peace that "passeth all understanding", and the lifeless body of Uma lying across his lap, take us to a realm of artistic imagination at once religious and deeply symbolic. Nandalal in, unapproachable in works of this kind, he is the master-artist.

decorative sense is intensely intriguing and his versatility in this direction is amazing "Garuda" reproduced in sister Nivedita's "Myths and Legends of India", was an early examples of Nandalal's decorative effort and since then in a hundred and are ways he has delighted art lover's with his janeiful fantasia.

he has another side to his nature unsuspected by many. His child-like heart ever keeps him in playful moods and, at time mischievous, sketches, drawings, designs and paintings executed in those moods are irresistible in their appeal both to the young and the old. He created quite a stir among art lovers, when he painted that Buddha series, in a very unconventional but in triguingly decorative style, for the Christmas Annual Harmonious colour schemes and the naive narration of the story in the child-like simplicity caught the popular fancy but worried the unimaginitive. Nandalal is at his best in such moods.

he designed, along with gagan Babu, those colourful decors and sets for Rabindranath musical plays like **"The Kingdom of Cards"**, **"Shapamochan"**, **"Nateer Fuja"**, which were definite artistic contributions to the theatre art. He could have made a fortune had he consented to create period sets and costume for classical Indian films. But his greatest achievement was

when he made art history in this country by becoming official architect and designer of the Indian National Congress and created those magical cities at Haripura and Faizpur out of such common stuff as split bamboos, that is, brown paper and east earthen pots.

Nandalal's first and last love was, of course, Shantiniketan, where surrounded by his pupils, he lives a dedicated life, and died in 1966.

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